Constructing Equilibrium through Team Dynamics in MSSP 2024

Supervised by Dr. Takanori Kawamata

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Sakiho Mori

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This research explores how students navigate the destruction and reconstruction of equilibrium in multicultural environments through team activities in Project-Based Learning to achieve their objectives. In 2024, I participated in the Meisei Summer School Project (hereafter MSSP) as a Student Assistant (hereafter SA) to support students involved in the project. MSSP is a program in which students from the Department of International Studies at Meisei University collaborate with international students to teach English to elementary and junior high school students in Hino City. Through MSSP, participants learn to engage in team projects and work effectively in multicultural environments. This study focuses on the evolving participation attitudes within a team of International Studies students and international volunteers, examining how participants identified and established their roles in the collaborative process to achieve team objectives. My decision to pursue this research was inspired by my experience participating in MSSP 2023.

Reflecting on my experiences from MSSP 2023, when I was a third-year undergraduate student participating in the program for the second time, I observed various team dynamics. My team included two first-year students, a fourth-year student, an international student from Belgium, and an international volunteer from Georgia. Except for me, all participants were experiencing MSSP for the first time. Some team members struggled to complete their assigned tasks effectively. During MSSP 2023, team members learned the importance of finding compromises and reaching agreements through repeated conflicts of opinion. After the session, I realized that even participants who seemed to lack an obvious contribution still had roles to fulfill within the team. This led to my interest in how participants who initially contributed little eventually learned their roles within MSSP and how their attitudes toward participation evolved.

I became curious about how team members with different skills and objectives reconciled their differences during the process of team formation. These observations shaped the two research questions for my 2024 study,

1. How do the participation attitudes of Meisei University students evolve during MSSP 2024?
2. How are the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction of equilibrium within a team socially constructed?

I conducted this research during MSSP 2024, focusing on one team. Data were collected through voice recordings of team meeting conversations, detailed field notes, and interviews conducted from April to August 2024. As an SA, I provided feedback to facilitate team discussions and offered advice on lesson planning. This study employed the conceptual frameworks of Communities of Practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the Punctuated Equilibrium Model (Gersick, 1988), using an ethnographic approach grounded in qualitative research.

Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework

In this research, I observed how participants' attitudes and roles within the team evolved throughout MSSP 2024, with a particular focus on how equilibrium was maintained within the group. To analyze the data, I employed two conceptual frameworks: Communities of Practice (CoP) introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and the Punctuated Equilibrium Model (PEM) introduced by Gersick (1988).

2-1. Communities of Practice (CoP)

Communities of Practice (CoP) are groups of individuals who share a common interest or profession and engage in collective learning through shared practices over time (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This concept is particularly relevant in educational settings, where collaborative efforts drive both individual and group development. CoP consists of three core elements: the community, the domain, and the practice.

The community refers to the social relationships among members, where interactions foster trust, collaboration, and mutual influence. The domain defines the shared area of interest or expertise that brings the members together, providing a focused context for their activities and discussions. The practice encompasses the shared tools, methods, and experiences that members exchange and refine, enhancing their skills and the overall competence of the group.

MSSP is designed with the explicit goal of fostering CoP (Kawamata, 2020). The program shifts away from a traditional, teacher-centered model to one that is student-centered,

encouraging participants to take ownership of their learning. This approach emphasizes the importance of social interactions and collaboration, allowing participants to actively engage in constructing knowledge and building a cohesive learning community.

2-2. Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Lave and Wenger (1991) describe Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) as the process by which newcomers gradually integrate into a community of practice by interacting with experienced members. This process involves building relationships between newcomers and old-timers, engaging in shared activities, adopting group identities, utilizing artifacts, and acquiring shared knowledge.

In the context of MSSP, participants who initially appear disengaged, such as those who do not actively contribute ideas or complete assigned tasks, are often perceived as "free riders." However, some of these seemingly inactive participants actively observe the behaviors and actions of core team members, develop an understanding of the team’s dynamics, and identify roles that align with the needs of the group. These participants demonstrate Legitimate Peripheral Participation, a process particularly common among first-year and first-time MSSP students as they gradually adapt to the collaborative environment.

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2-3. Punctuated Equilibrium Model (PEM)

The Punctuated Equilibrium Model (PEM) is a useful framework for understanding how equilibrium is maintained, disrupted, and reestablished within team dynamics. According to Gersick (1988), PEM describes a process where teams work in a stable state for a certain period, go through a phase of significant disruption or transformation, and then transition to a new stable state.

This model shows the balance between periods of stability and moments of change, providing insight into how teams adapt to challenges and adjust their structures to handle new tasks. In this study, PEM is used to examine the initial equilibrium in MSSP projects and to explore how teams reconstruct their dynamics after major changes or disruptions.

2-4. Integration of CoP and PEM Frameworks

Data from a team participating in MSSP 2024 were analyzed using the frameworks of CoP and PEM. This dual-framework approach allowed for a detailed examination of how team members' positions and roles within the community changed over the course of the project.

The analysis focused on the connection between CoP's focus on participation, identity formation, and shared practices, and PEM's explanation of organizational change through Gersick's phases of equilibrium, disruption (punctuation), and the creation of a new equilibrium. By combining these perspectives, the study showed how key transitions and moments of disruption affected team dynamics and collaboration, eventually leading to the development of a new stable framework for the group.

Chapter 3 Methodology

For this study, I adopted a qualitative research methodology, primarily utilizing ethnographic methods. Qualitative research involves analyzing and synthesizing texts to empirically generate new insights and knowledge (Reeves, Kuper, Hodges, 2017). The data collection process included voice recordings, interviews, and detailed field notes. I considered interactions during face-to-face group discussions, Zoom meetings, and informal settings as valuable sources of data.

I conducted individual interviews with each team member to explore how their perceptions of MSSP 2024 evolved over time. These interviews covered their experiences during the 15 pre-intensive classes and their participation in team activities. Additionally, I used field notes to document one-on-one conversations I had with team members during activities, as part of my role as an SA. Beyond voice recordings, I also observed and recorded participants' behaviors during conversations and included these observations in my field notes.

3-1. Data Collection Site

I selected MSSP as the data collection site for this study. MSSP is a course offered at Meisei University that follows a Project-Based Learning approach. The program involves collaboration

between Meisei University students, exchange students, and international volunteers to teach English to elementary school students in Hino City during the summer. From April to July, participants learned teaching methods and the process of creating lesson plans. Participants conducted multiple mock lessons, received feedback from instructors, SAs, and other participants, and used the feedback to refine the lesson plans. Through these activities, participants developed social and collaborative skills, including appropriate actions within a team and effective communication with individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The primary aim of this study was to analyze how participants navigated the destruction and reconstruction of equilibrium in multicultural environments through team activities. To interpret the data, two theoretical frameworks were applied: CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and PEM (Gersick, 1988). The unique structure and dynamics of MSSP provided a fitting environment to explore these processes, as the program required participants to engage in diverse team settings while balancing various challenges and responsibilities.

3-2. Participants

I selected one team from MSSP 2024 for this study. The participants are listed in the table below.

Name	Grade	Gender	Nationality
Maki	3	F	Japan
Yuta	3	M	Japan
Daiki	1	M	Japan
Raia	1	M	Japan
Taiki	1	M	Japan
Dahlia	Graduate student	F	China
Niki	1	F	Georgia

3-3. Research Ethics

To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were used in the analysis. Additionally, I obtained

consent from all participants to analyze their data. After completing the research, all recorded data was deleted.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

In this chapter, I analyzed how the team maintained equilibrium while building a community during MSSP 2024, using the frameworks of CoP and PEM. The analysis was based on voice recordings of team meetings, interviews with individual team members conducted after MSSP 2024, and field notes I wrote during the program as an SA. The focus of this analysis was on the roles of team members and how these roles changed over time.

The data revealed that various events during MSSP 2024 influenced the formation of the community. While the team attempted to maintain equilibrium by establishing a hierarchy, it became clear that the community, composed of both new and experienced members, remained in a state of disequilibrium until the end of the program. I analyzed this process in three phases, observing the members' positions within the CoP framework: the Equilibrium phase, the Punctuation phase, and the New Equilibrium phase.

4-1 Equilibrium Phase: Constructing Community through Role Adaptation

At the beginning of the program, the team members contributed to building a sense of community by adjusting to different contexts: one where English was actively used and another where discussions were conducted in Japanese. During MSSP, instructors encouraged participants to become International Language Users, Accountable Team Members, and Positive Learners. In MSSP classes, participants were required to communicate in English.

For example, Yuta actively took the lead in speaking English during classroom discussions and when interacting with international students and volunteers on the team, positioning himself as a Central Participant. During these moments, Maki stepped slightly away from Central Participation. However, Maki took on a Central Participant role during Japanese discussions, while Yuta shifted slightly outward from the center.

Among the three first-year students, Daiki, Taiki, and Raia, there was minimal

participation in English at the beginning. However, Daiki demonstrated engagement by nodding while listening and showing visible reactions when he did not understand. Dahlia, an exchange student from China, shared her opinions during English discussions but rarely participated when Japanese was the primary language. After Niki joined the team, the use of English in discussions became more prominent.

Excerpt 1

“Yuta: First day, we going to do えっとーあーどう訳したらいいんだ how じゃないなんだ。[First day, we're going to do it. Umm, how should I translate this? It's not "how".]

Maki: where do you...

Yuta: where

Maki: where do you want to go? and what do you want to do?” (Voice recording June 28)

Excerpt 1 demonstrated that Yuta actively spoke in English.

Excerpt 2

“Maki: 掃除、持ち物、ホームワーク、スポーツフェスティバル、プラクティス、どれ？ [Cooking, belongings, homework, sports festivals, practices. Which one?]

Daiki: ちょ、今何やってます？クリーンナップですか？ クリーンナップのダイヤログ? [Hey, what are you doing now? Talking about cleaning up? The dialogue about cleaning up?]

Maki: うん。でも今一個目やるから大丈夫 [Yes, but we are going to discuss about the first one now, so it's okay]

Daiki: 全然全然。ちょ、難しいので任せます。 [Not at all. Hey, it's difficult, so I'll leave it to you, Maki.]

Maki: なんでもいいよ [I do not know. Anything is fine.]

Yuta: あ、今一個目？ [Oh, the first one now?] (voice recording 11th July)

Excerpt 2 demonstrated that Maki actively spoke in Japanese.

Interview Data 1

“Daiki: Yuta 先輩は日本人だけど英語を使うのですごく英語を使う。私たちに英語を使えって圧力かけてくる人だし。Niki が来て自分が日本語でどうしても英語で

伝えきれないことを Yuta 先輩に日本語で言って Niki に伝えてもらうみたいな。Dahlia にも伝えてもらってました。[Yuta is Japanese, but he uses English a lot, so he really pushes us to use English. He pressures us to speak English. When Niki came, there were times when I couldn't express something in English, so I would tell Yuta in Japanese and ask to translate it to Niki. Dahlia also had Yuta help translate.]" (Voice recording September 7)

Interview data 2

"Dahlia: Yuta は、Niki さんとの連絡。Niki さんと私、留学生たちのサポートをしてくれた。英語の翻訳、字訳。[Yuta was in charge of communication with Niki. He supported Niki, myself, and the other exchange students. He did English translation and written translations.]" (Voice recording 13th September)

Interview Data 3

"Yuta: Maki は一番頑張ってくれてた。いろんなことの準備とか、俺が動くより先に動いてくれて、すごい引っ張ってくれてた。チーム的にも Maki にすごい助けてもらってたし。でも Maki も 1 人で突っ走っちゃうからたまにみんなが Maki の意見についてきてないまま話が進んじゃうこともあった。[Maki was the one who worked the hardest. She was preparing a lot of things and moved before I did. She really led the way. As a team, we were helped a lot by Maki. But Maki sometimes ran ahead on her own, and at times the conversation moved forward without everyone following her opinions.]" (Voice recording September 7)

According to Interview Data 1 and Interview Data 2, Yuta encouraged the team to use English and supported international members, such as Dahlia, an exchange student from China, and Niki, an international volunteer from Georgia, by serving as an interpreter. These data suggest that Yuta played a central participatory role when the team used English, fostering an environment where English became the primary language of communication.

In contrast, Excerpts 2 and Interview Data 3 indicated that Maki was a central participant, particularly during discussions conducted in Japanese. Excerpt 3 revealed that Daiki initially did not actively contribute to the team's discussions but made efforts to understand the

content. As noted in my field notes, "Daiki often listened attentively to the speaker, nodded, and reacted" (Field Note, June 28). This behavior suggests that Daiki was engaging in what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as Legitimate Peripheral Participation—starting with passive involvement and gradually becoming more engaged over time.

At this stage, Taiki, Raia, and Dahlia did not take on major roles within the team. Consequently, the positions of Yuta and Maki shifted as the central participants within the community. As members worked on the tasks assigned by the instructor, an initial equilibrium was established within the team.

4-2 Punctuation Phase: Shifts in Roles and Deconstruction of Equilibrium

In this section, I explain how the positions within the team shifted as a result of Maki's actions as a central participant. Maki's behavior influenced Daiki, who engaged as a legitimate peripheral participant, as well as Taiki and Raia, who remained peripheral participants. The analysis revealed that, for team members to move closer to the center of the community, a process of deconstruction within the community was necessary.

Interview data 5

"Me: MSSP を通して成長したと思う?私から見ても成長したなって思うんだけど。 [What do you think you have grown through this MSSP? I think you grew from my perspective as well.]

Daiki: チームマネジメント力。自分 1 年生だからチームをまとめって役割じゃないんだと思うんですけど、やらないといけないと思いました。[My team management skills. As a first-year student, I didn't think I was in a position to lead the team, but I realized I had to do it.]

Me: 例えば？[For example?]

Daiki: 1 年生の Taiki と Raia があんまりやってなかったところは、サポートしないといけないなっていう気持ちになった。最初の頃は自分だけできればいいなって思ってたんですけど、最後の方にはもう周りをサポートしてやっていく気持ちになりました。[I felt like I needed to support Taiki and Raia, who weren't doing much. At the beginning, I just thought it was enough for me to do things on my own, but by the

end, I felt the need to support everyone around me and do things together.]

Me: そうなるほどね。最初はそういうふうには思ってなかったってことでしょ？ [I see. So, at the beginning, you did not feel that way?]

Daiki: 最初はもう怠惰でした。 [At first, I was lazy.]

Me: どのあたりで変わっていったの？[When did you start changing?]

Daiki: いやー、Maki 先輩に怒られた時とかですね。[Well, it was when Maki-senpai scolded me.]

Me: いつ怒られたの?そんなことあったんだ。[When did that happen? I did not know that.]

Daiki: ありました。怒られましたね。zoom のミーティングがあって。最初はまあみんな話してて。活発してたんですけど、最後らへん普通にあんまり意見で出てこなくて。うちのチームであんまり意見出にくいんですよ。あの挑戦的な意見が出なくて。それもあって最後にはもうみんな意見が出なくてみんな zoom を退出するみたいなことになった。 Yuta 先輩と Maki 先輩 2 人だけが最後残るみたいな感じの会議があったんですよ 1 回。 [Yes, it happened. I was scolded during a Zoom meeting. At first, everyone was talking. Everyone was active, but towards the end, no one was really contributing ideas. Our team had difficulty expressing challenging opinions. By the end, no one was speaking, and everyone was leaving the Zoom meeting. Only Yuta-senpai and Maki-senpai stayed until the end during one meeting.]

Me: 最初は何人いたの？ [How many people were there at first?]

Daiki: 最初は Dahlia と俺と Taiki と Raia、 Yuta 先輩 Maki 先輩がいて全員いたんですよ。でその後に「私たちはちゃんと考えてるんだから、みんなでちゃんと考えよう」というお叱りを受けましたね。まあ当たり前のことなんですけどね。 [At first, there were Dahlia, me, Taiki, Raia, Yuta-senpai, and Maki-senpai, so everyone was there. Then, we were scolded with the message, “We are thinking seriously, so we should all think together.” It was a natural thing, but still, it was something we needed to hear.]” (Voice recording September 7)

Interview data 5 demonstrated that Maki’s action changed Daiki’s behavior motivation toward MSSP.

Interview data 6

"Me：Raia はどうやってモチベーションキープしてたの？ [How did Raia keep your motivation up?]

Raia: Taiki と元々友達だったのもあってグループがやりやすい環境にあったからだと 思います。 [Since I was originally friends with Taiki, it was easier to be in a group with him, so I think that made the environment more comfortable.]

Me：一年生多かったもんね [There were a lot of first-year students, right?]

Raia:それもあるし、一回 Maki 先輩に怒られたんですよ。 [That's part of it, and I was also scolded by Maki-senpai once.]

Me：なんで怒られたの? [Why did she scold you?]

Raia:ズームやってたんですよ。Taiki と一緒にいて。最初メンバー全員いたんですけ ど、みんななんか抜けていって、自分も抜けたんですけど。 [We were having a Zoom meeting, and I was with Taiki. At first, all the members were there, but everyone started leaving, and I left as well.]

Me：なんで抜けたの？ [Why did you leave?]

Raia: なんか、みんな抜けてるからいいとかなって。 [Well, I thought it was okay since everyone else left.]

Me：お疲れ様も言わずに？ [You did not even say goodbye?]

Raia: 全然話途中で抜けちゃって。発言も全然してなかったので、怒られて。それで 多少はちゃんとやらないとっていう気持ちに。気持ち的にやる気が出てきた。Taiki とやばいって話して。ごめんなさいって。 [I just left without saying anything, and I had not contributed anything either, so I was scolded. After that, I felt I needed to take things more seriously. I talked with Taiki and said, "This is bad, we should apologize."]

Me ：そこからスイッチが入ったんだ。そこから自分の行動的にはどう変えていったの？ [That's when the switch flipped. How did your actions change after that?]

Raia: もうとにかく発言をしてこなかったので、Taiki とやらないとやばいなって話して。意見を出したりするようにした。[I had not been speaking up, so Taiki and I talked and decided we needed to start contributing. I made sure to start offering my opinions.]" (Voice recording 7th September)

Interview data 6 demonstrated that Maki's action changed Raia and Taiga's feeling against

MSSP.

Field note data 1

“Raia はモックレッスンで 4 月の時とは比べ物にならないくらいみんなの前で大きな声で英語を話せるようになった。授業外で練習したことがわかった。[Raia was able to speak English loudly in front of everyone during the mock lesson, which was a significant improvement compared to April. It was clear that she had practiced outside of the MSSP classes.]” (Field note July 23)

Excerpt 5

“Niki: three? ha-ha

Maki: yes ha-ha

Me: At first, self-introductions

Daiki: First, self-introductions

Maki: that's true

Daiki: who is the first, hello my name is Daiki, call me Daiki. Nice to meet you. My hobby is taking photos about scenery, okay that’s it.” (Voice recording July 12)

Excerpt 5 shows first conversation with Niki, international volunteer, when Niki arrived.

Excerpt 6

“Niki: wow that’s pretty good. Nice to meet you. My name is Niki. It will be hard to remember all your name because it’s new for me. First of all, I’m already second year student. I’m studying a business management. I want to be a chef, and I want my own restaurant by myself. Hahn and I also love dancing. drawing, cooking. I was learning Japanese, but it was too hard. But I love Japanese letter. Hope we will we have a great plan to teach children. It will be hard because they are first graders. Hahaha but I hope we will come up with good activities.

Yuta: yeah

Daiki: nice to meet you.

(10.0)

Niki: I talked you too much. I love Japan.

Daiki: Nice… Three common. I love cats.

Niki: I have Neko (Cat).

Daiki: wow what kind of Neko?" (Voice recording July 12)

Excerpt 6 demonstrated that there are some pause in the first conversation.

Interview Data 5 and 6 revealed that Maki's influence contributed to changes in the awareness of MSSP among Daiki, Raia, and Taiki. Field Note Data 1 indicated that Raia's change in awareness was reflected in her behavior. Excerpts 5 and 6 showed that Daiki, who initially participated peripherally, began actively speaking in English. The actions associated with central participation led to the deconstruction of the established community, resulting in a shift in team members' awareness and the subsequent reconstruction of their roles within the team.

4-3 New Equilibrium Phase: Role Stabilization and Hierarchy Formation

Legitimate peripheral participation acted as a mediator and contributed to establishing a hierarchical structure within the team. Daiki, who engaged in legitimate peripheral participation, served as an intermediary between Taiki, Raia, Yuta, and Maki, facilitating the creation of a hierarchical structure that supported the establishment of a new equilibrium within the team. This highlights that legitimate peripheral participation played a crucial role in maintaining equilibrium within the team.

Interview data 7

"Me: あなたはチームでどんな役割だったと思う？[What role do you think you played in the team?]

Daiki: 自分は Taiki と Raia よりは、少しは英語できると思うんでその面で一年生を引っ張ったりした時もあったし。先輩ともいいコミュニケーションを取りながら伝達していくみたいな。[I thought I was better at speaking English than Taiki and Raia, so I led the first-year students. I also communicated well with the senior members and conveyed information.]

Me: あー中間な立場だった？[Oh, you were in a middle position?]

Daiki: はい。あの Raia が英語がわかんないんで。例えばフィードバックとかリ

フレクションで英語で言われる時に「こういうこと言ってるんだよ。」みたいなこと言ったり。[Yes. Raia did not understand English. For example, when feedback or reflections were given in English, I would explain, "This is what they're saying."]
Me: なるほどね。[I see.]
Daiki: その時に Raia 達はわかんないですって言わないから。[At that time, Raia and the others would not say they did not understand.]
Me: 言っていいのにね。[They should have said that, right?]
Daiki: まあ確かに。逆に自分からみんな誰も英語わかんないですって言わなかったじゃないですか。みんなうーんみたいな。その時にその翻訳みたいなこと。先輩はこういうこと言ってるからこういうことをしようみたいな感じでやってましたね。[Yeah, that is true. On the other hand, no one said they did not understand English. Everyone just went, "Hmm..." So, I did kind of a translation, like, "This is what the senior members are saying, so let's do this."]" (Voice recording 7th September)
Interview data 7 demonstrated that Daiki took inclusive behavior in the team.

Interview data 8
"Me: Daiki の働きはどうだった？[How was Daiki's performance?]
Taiki: できないことでも挑戦して、周りの人にも挑戦できるんだって思わせてくれたと思う。Daiki の行動が僕とか Raia にはよく働いたかなって思います。[He challenged himself even with things he could not do, and I think he made others believe that they could also take on challenges. I think Daiki's actions had a positive effect on me and Raia.]" (Voice recording September 7)

Interview data 9
"Me: Daiki は？[How about Daiki's perform?]
Raia: 僕たちのことを支えてくれた。一年生 3 人で Taiki と僕は何もできない状態だったので、すごい助けられました。[He supported us. As first-year students, Taiki and I couldn't do anything, so he was a great help.]
Me：どういった面で？[In what ways?]
Raia: 授業の作り方とかわかんなかったけど丁寧に教えてくれて、先輩たちに聞く

のはなかなか難しくて Daiki に色々教えてもらいながらやることができました。支えてもらった。感謝してます。[I could not understand how to prepare lessons, but he taught me carefully. It was hard to ask the seniors, so I was able to learn a lot from Daiki. I'm really grateful for his support.]" (Voice recording September 7)

Excerpt 8

"Dahlia: So it's like I guide one line, you guide one line, and that line の中で自身と後ろ、前の人 pair work. And then change. So the change means...同じラインの中で自身と前の人？そういう意味ですか？[So, it's within the line, yourself and the person in front? Is that what you mean?]

Daiki: うーん？ですよね？Raia さん [Ummm?? Right? Raia?]

Raia: はい [Yes.]

Daiki: あのー男と女が最初並ぶやん？並んだあと、一つ目のアクティビティ終わったあとチェンジするってことだよね？[So, the boys and girls line up first, right? After that, they switch after the first activity, right?]

Raia: そう、うんとー、パートを変える、2 回ずつやる、うんとー、一回やるじゃん？もう一回やって、で next change part Girls Raia part Boys Dahlia part play twice [Yeah, umm, they change parts and do it twice. Umm, they do it once, then again, and then next, they change parts. Girls take Raia's part, Boys take Dahlia's part, and they play twice.]

Dahlia: Ahn So the pair work is for group A and B? A to B, A to B, A to B? Or yes

Daiki: Pair work is men's team and women's team, separate the team and let's do pair work?

Dahlia: Oh Okay

Dahlia: the pair work is just like what we do as you are or you will be...うーん we cut two parts. And let the 人、隣の人 do pair work. So, it's the same? [Umm, we divide it into two parts. And let the people, the person next to them, do pair work. So, it's the same?]

Daiki: Yes

Dahlia: It's the same.

Daiki: Raia そうだよね？ [Raia, that's right, isn't it?]

Raia: はい [Yes.]

Daiki: えー絵を描こう Raia 絵を描こう [Uh, let's draw a picture. Raia, let's draw a picture to describe it.]" (Voice recording 18th July)

Excerpt 8 is discussion data on Raia's lesson plan. Daiki and Dahlia talked about understanding Raia's lesson plan. Excerpt 8 demonstrated that Daiki was interpreter between Raia and Dahlia when Daiki, Raia and Dahlia discuss in team meeting.

Interview data 7 and 8 revealed that Daiki exhibited inclusive behaviors, particularly among first-year students. As shown in Excerpt 8, Daiki served as an interpreter between exchange student Dahlia and the first-year students. When Yuta and Maki were absent, Daiki notably took on a role of central participation. In Interview data 9, Raia, also a first-year student, mentioned the difficulty of directly asking third-year students Maki and Yuta for help. Daiki created an environment in which Taiki and Raia felt motivated to improve. This led to the establishment of a hierarchical structure within the team, where roles were clearly defined, and new equilibrium was constructed.

4-4 Persisting Disequilibrium: Challenges of Inclusion in a Multicultural Team

The events that could have significantly impacted the team's structure did not lead to substantial changes, and disequilibrium persisted within the newly formed community. When the team began to form, Niki, an international volunteer from Georgia, joined as a legitimate peripheral participant. According to field notes, Niki's participation attitude differed from that of the Japanese students, giving the impression that Niki had low motivation toward MSSP 2024.

After Niki joined, discussions in English became mandatory. However, the number of contributions from Yuta and Maki, who had previously been central participants, decreased, disrupting the smooth flow of discussions. Additionally, the team struggled to finalize decisions within the scheduled meeting times. Meanwhile, within the community composed solely of Meisei University's Japanese students, a hierarchical structure was established, which maintained equilibrium and allowed for smoother discussions and decision-making.

Excerpt 9

"Maki: What Instructor said? I can not...

Daiki: Today's plan, who is going first?

Maki: uhm

(10.0)

Daiki: 1day second class, Taiki's class.

Maki: introduction?

Niki: Can I see it?

Maki: This it a old one, I send it discord.

Niki: Ahn yeah, I have it. I think.

(12.0)

Niki: I think first day I have a lesson about hobbies. And the second lesson when I am main teacher, is 8 or 9 August. I don't remember." (Voice recording July 29)

Excerpt 10

"Taiki: What subject do you have?

Maki: ちょっと待って、書く。ファイナルプロダクト [Wait a moment, I'm writing. Final product.]

Daiki: 今日ファイナルプロダクトやるんでしたっけ？ [Are we doing the final product today?]

Maki: 発表するんだって [We're supposed to present it.]

Taiki: ファイナルプロダクトプレゼンテーション [Final product presentation.]

Maki: ジャズチャンスでやってやんないと覚えられなくない? そう、1 年生が。何がいいんだろう? [The children would prefer a jazz chants presentation, right? They are first year students, so anything other than jazz chants would be difficult for them. What would be better?]

Taiki: なんか適当な音源に文言合わせればいいか。[I guess we can just match some random audio with the script.]

Maki: そう、まず何を言うか。[Yeah, first, we need to decide what to say.]

Daiki: ハローじゃん [It's "Hello," right?]" (Voice recording August 1)

Excerpt 9 indicated that Maki, who had previously held a central position, shifted slightly to the periphery, with Daiki taking on the central role instead. The excerpt also highlighted the presence of pauses, lasting between 10.0 and 12.0 minutes, which disrupted the smooth

progression of conversations. Additionally, pauses exceeding one minute were observed during this discussion. This pattern persisted even after the intensive lectures ended, suggesting that the community, including Niki, continued to experience disequilibrium.

On the other hand, during a meeting involving only Japanese students, as shown in Excerpt 10, Taiki, who had previously been less vocal, became more active in discussions. Moreover, the time required for decision-making within the team also decreased. This shift indicated that equilibrium was maintained within the team, enabling its progress in a positive direction.

4-5 Summary

This chapter clarified how team members maintained equilibrium within the team while adapting to shifts and transformations in their roles, influenced by various factors throughout the MSSP 2024 project. To establish a new equilibrium, the team created a structure suited to the circumstances, with a transformation initiated by Maki. Daiki, as a legitimate peripheral participant, played a mediating role that influenced team members and contributed to stabilizing the team by establishing a hierarchical structure. However, after Niki joined, the team experienced a significant impact strong enough to prompt transformation. Yet, due to a lack of visible efforts toward reconstruction, disequilibrium persisted within the fully inclusive community.

This chapter analyzed the team's process of maintaining equilibrium to achieve the project's goals. It concluded that the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction through transformation were essential for maintaining equilibrium. Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of creating a structure that aligns with the team's needs to sustain equilibrium.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This study explored the processes through which team members in MSSP 2024 maintained equilibrium by recognizing roles and engaging in cycles of deconstruction and reconstruction. It was observed that central participation behaviors influenced peripheral participants, with

legitimate peripheral participation playing a key role in maintaining equilibrium. This form of participation contributed to the team's unique contextual structure. However, by the latter half of MSSP 2024, the community became unbalanced again, and no clear attempts at reconstruction were identified.

The findings suggest that intentional mechanisms to support community reconstruction are necessary in international projects. The time constraints of such projects may also limit the ability to fully observe or achieve reconstruction processes. For example, although the reconstruction process after Niki, the international volunteer, joined the team was not confirmed, changes in Daiki's perception of Niki and increased communication opportunities between them were noted.

Through this study, I reflected on my own experiences. During my four years at university, I participated in various PBL courses. In most of these projects, I often assumed the role of a leader or central participant within the team. I consistently believed that a leader must be attentive to other members, act inclusively, and organize the team to foster improvement. However, I realized that visible contributions, such as task completion or idea generation, are not the most critical factors. Instead, understanding each team member's strengths and weaknesses and complementing each other's abilities is essential for maintaining equilibrium. Additionally, I came to understand that addressing conflicts directly, rather than avoiding them, is crucial for improving team dynamics.

Future research should focus on observing teams over longer periods to capture multiple cycles of community deconstruction and reconstruction. It will be especially valuable to examine positional shifts within CoP and the processes of maintaining equilibrium when new members join CoP.

As this study is context-specific, focusing on the dynamics of MSSP 2024, its findings may not be generalizable to all settings. Nevertheless, it provides valuable insights into how team dynamics evolve and are maintained in equilibrium within PBL environments. It also contributes to a broader understanding of team dynamics and offers suggestions for improving the design of international collaborative learning programs.

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